



Lumberjack Newsletter

VOLUME I, ISSUE III

June 2004

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The Army Celebrates it's 229th Birthday

15 June 2004, was the Army's 229th Birthday. Army tradition is to have the youngest and the oldest Soldier cut the birthday cake; and even though we are far from home the tradition continued here in Iraq. Our very own Lumberjack, PFC Dustin French, from Charlie Company happened to be the youngest Soldier on Ironhorse Base, having just turned 18 a few months before deploying to Iraq. With age comes experience, and we are definitely gaining experience here; whether it be administering humanitarian aid or rebuilding the Iraqi infrastructure, our Lumberjacks will continue to support the Army for many birthdays to come.



PFC French and SGM Quinones, the youngest and oldest Soldiers on Ironhorse Base, cut the Army Birthday cake.

From the Commander . . .

By LTC Barrett Holmes

Every time you watch the news or read the paper most of the information regarding Iraq is negative. The majority of the headlines focus on death, destruction and the efforts of anti Iraqi forces to destabilize the interim government. Images of burning vehicles, attacks against government officials, the dead and wounded, and the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghuraib dominate the headlines. To coin a phrase used by Paul Harvey, I would like to tell you the "rest of the story" as I see it in the 1st Brigade Combat team's sector in Baghdad.

We have been in theater just over 90 days and even though we are operating in a combat environment, the 20th Engineer Battalion and the 1st Brigade Combat team have accomplished a tremendous amount in a very short period of time. As stated in previous newsletters, we are working diligently to reestablish basic sewer, water, power and trash services for the people in our sector. In some cases, these basic necessities we take for granted do not exist and we are

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Animal News

By CPT Marc Distefano

When I started to write this newsletter, I was planning to rehash some of the operations that your soldiers have been a part of and what an excellent job they have been doing. However, I decided to describe a simple act of kindness that I witnessed that is demonstrative of the overall work the entire battalion has been a part of for the past two months: **winning the hearts and minds of the locals, one at a time.** On 10 June 2004, our company was in charge of clearing some barriers from a road in order to open a main highway for the Iraqi people. Along this road is an overpass where an Iraqi family lives (literally under the overpass, impoverished, half clothed children, no running water, etc). As our soldiers were working, members of the family informed our soldiers of some mortar rounds and other unexploded ordnance they found near the

work site. *Why did they inform us?* Because in the past, our soldiers have shown great compassion and professionalism towards this family, and many families like this in our Area of Operation. As a result, lives were protected and we gained a trusting friend that believes that we are working to bring them a better life. This isn't a breaking news headline that you will see on CNN; however, our soldiers risk their lives every day getting out to areas with thousands of families just like our bridge family in order to better their quality of life through infrastructure recons and identifying solutions to basic services problems (sewage, water, electricity, trash).

In addition to the hard work we put in, the company leadership is working hard to improve some of the recreational activities for our soldiers. I

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Barracuda News

By CPT Dave Woodruff

Another mark on the wall as June has passed so quickly. The Barracuda Team remains "Always Ready" (the Task Force 1-12 Motto) to accomplish any mission under any circumstances. The soldiers of Barracuda are by far the best soldiers in the Army. Their attention to detail and rigorous work ethic sets the standard for the rest of the Task Force. Our goal is to maintain this vigilant attitude, and bring everyone home safely.

We would like to take this time to welcome SPC Michael Frost, SPC Stephen White Lance, PV2 Steven Joseph, and PVT Nathaniel Campbell into Barracuda.

The quality of life at Camp War Eagle is constantly getting better. We now have an excellent Internet Café with 20 computers capable of Web-Cam. We work hard to improve our living conditions here and also at the U.N. Complex. SGT Richard Ford, SPC Bradley Bailey, and SPC Michael Bubb, Barracuda Lightning as the company calls them, reestablished the original wiring for our living quarters at the U.N. Their expertise and knowledge in electrical wiring helped tremendously to finally bring lights, fans, and air conditioning to our primitive way of life while guarding the U.N. Needless to say, they have many stories to tell about their shocking experiences working with Iraq's 220 volt system. We are very lucky to have our Barracuda Maintenance team (Barracuda Wrench), who continue to amaze the company with their keen eye to not only take care of the vehicles we drive throughout Baghdad, but also their ability to fix, repair, and can do attitude with any project.

The month of June has been crazy to say the least. We now have our 2nd Platoon back in the family, to continue our missions and develop stronger relationships with the local populace. We are glad 2nd Platoon is back in the fight and eager to continue steady state operations. SFC Michael Brown, the platoon sergeant for 2nd Platoon, will be heading to Battalion and SSG (P) Ivan Mcstay will take charge of the great soldiers in 2nd.

One of the many accomplishments Barracuda contributed to in June was the opening of Canal Road. Canal Road is a major highway that bisects

the northeastern portion of Baghdad between the Diyala and Tigris Rivers. This highway has been closed since the tragic bombing at the United Nations building in August 2003. MSG Hyland (HHC 20th), MSG Harvey (D Co ESE), and 1LT Calvin Kroeger were instrumental in moving and emplacing over 350 Texas and Jersey barriers along the route. The highway reopening is a major step towards Iraq's transfer of sovereignty. This event marks 1st Brigade Combat Team's step forward in the Northern Baghdad area and shows our commitment to the people of the area.

Another major event coming up for the Barracudas is the company change of command, after almost 18 months in command I will pass the guidon over to CPT Dennis Pintor. CPT Pintor is coming from the Assistant Brigade Engineer position at the 1st Brigade Combat Team's Tactical Operation Center, where he took a major part in the planning of the Brigade's deployment and infrastructure management in the northern Baghdad area. I will be moving to the 1st Cavalry Division's Engineer Brigade, where I will continue to help improve the Iraqi people's way of life. Although it will be difficult for me to move on after command, I am glad to know that the company will be in the capable hands of CPT Pintor.

I would like to especially thank Jess Stocker for her unwavering loyalty to the members of Bravo Company, Morgan Whisenant for her commitment to all the soldiers, Cathy Kroeger for the many times she opened her house for numerous gatherings, FRG events, and her leadership of the Company FRG, and all of the spouses of our great soldiers who helped out in the FRG like Desty Boatright, Amanda Sconyers, Lavey Akins, Stephanie Richardson, Erin Kubena, Melissa Moreno, and Melanie Oberkirsch. Thanks to all of you, it could not have been done without you and the support you gave to the company and your husbands.

I would also like to thank the best Soldiers in the Army, the men of Bravo Company, 20th Engineer Battalion, TF 1-12 CAV. These soldiers have

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Castle News

By CPT Zachary Miller

My last several updates have focused on the important missions Team Castle has conducted in the First Brigade area of operations. While this remains our focus, I would like to highlight a few other aspects of our operations here in Baghdad.

We are currently having incredible success with our equipment maintenance. Nearly every vehicle in our fleet has already logged thousands of miles, and we have had fewer problems than we typically experience in a two week trip to the field at Fort Hood. This is due almost entirely to our great team of mechanics as well as each and every driver and operator, whose dedication and expertise is truly impressive.

Everybody on Team Castle recognizes the importance of having balance in your day-to-day life. In support of this, SFC Andréa Johnson, SFC David Judd, and SSG Chris Martin helped co-

found a weekly Gospel service that ministers to all the soldiers on Ironhorse Base. Their efforts greatly contribute to developing and nurturing a critical component of our success.

Several of our outstanding soldiers have recently made the choice to "Stay Army." Retaining quality soldiers is one of my top priorities, and I am proud to say that the following have reaffirmed their commitment to supporting our Nation at war:

SSG Darron Adams
SSG Robert Franks
SGT Vincent Sansone
SPC Tascha Williams
SPC Edmar Tomarong
SPC Byron Delgado
SPC Ted Braunch

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SSG Darron Adams takes the Oath of Enlistment from 1LT Gary McDonald.



3rd Platoon, Charlie Company checks an area of interest during a recent patrol.

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This month we had to say farewell to 1LT Al Muna who has moved over to HHC and is now their Executive Officer. He has done a great job over the past year, and I'm sure he will make important contributions to HHC. We also hailed 1LT Kris Johnson and his wife Shelby to the Castle Team as our Executive Officer; he has already made a positive impact on our operations, and I know he will continue to do so.

As we enter our fourth month in theater, we also begin the Environmental Leave Program which will allow much of the Battalion to spend two weeks in the United States with their family and friends. I know you all look forward to spending time with your Soldier, and I hope that it provides you a chance to relax and enjoy what is undoubtedly a well earned break. Thanks for everything you are doing to support us. God bless all of you and God bless America. **-Castle 6**

Barracuda News, cont.

(Continued from page 3)

been like sons, younger brothers, older brothers, cousins, uncles and yes even some like fathers. Their support, bravery, courage, and strength has been a marvel to behold, through PT, road marches, field training, ranges, NTC, and now combat, the soldiers of this company have excelled, being the first and best at things is what the men of Barracuda do extremely well. I will always remember the sacrifices the men of Bravo Company have made, they have made an enduring mark on my heart and will forever be one of the greatest things I have been part of.

To my beautiful wife and sons, thank you for all the cold dinners, late nights, missed family outings, Saturday nights waiting in the car as I made barracks checks, and now another year away, this is two, hopefully we will not have to go through a third.

Finally to God and Country, I have been blessed to able to lead part of the next greatest generation, thank you to LTC Holmes 20th Engineer Battalion Commander, LTC Meredith TF 1-12 CAV Commander, COL Abrams 1st Brigade Combat Team Commander and COL Cox the 1st Cavalry Division's Engineer Brigade Commander for giving me the honor and privilege of command. I have loved every minute of it and will remember it always. God bless you and God Bless the United States of America.

BARRACUDA 6 OUT!!



COL Abrams pins Purple Hearts on Barracuda Soldiers at a recent ceremony.

Thunder News

By CPT Stephen Wickersham

Thunder welcomes 1LT Alfred Muna to the company as the new Thunder 5 (XO), as LT Caflin goes to help out the S4 shop.

HHC is still holding down the fort at Ironhorse. We are continuing to conduct FOB upgrades in order to increase our security and improve our way of life. HHC and ESE continue to run LOG-PAC, which provides the entire base with parts, food, water, fuel, and mail. ESE is still providing outstanding maintenance for the battalion and continues to help upgrade the battalion's wheeled vehicles by adding plates of steel to the doors. If it's a project with steel, ESE can do it. We're happy to have them as part of our team. **-Thunder 6**

Below are several section specific articles.

From the S2 Section

Once again the S2 "Bloodhounds" have been hard at it. CPT O'Malley headed up an effort to re-screen all workers on post to keep the BN safe and secure. The 1st Cavalry Division Commanding General gave good "kudos" for our Intelligence Web site, which gave the rest of the hounds some good attention. One of the fringe benefits of being in security is storing all the money the battalion uses to help rebuild Iraq's infrastructure. Harris has the important job of locking up the cash. Lambrelli gets out every now and then on reconnaissance missions. SGT Brogan spends most of his days crunching numbers and making IED reports. We did get a visit from the Division SGM who didn't think that SFC Wilmot gave the Radio operators enough time

to call home. He hooked up SPC Sisler with a call home and also talked to his mom about



SPC Sisler getting ready to call home.

Sisler reenlisting.

From the S3 Section

During the last month, the S3 section has been hectic to say the least. We've been busy writing contracts, planning city projects for the Baghdad Municipalities and continuing to uphold peace and quality of life for the citizens of Baghdad. CPT St. John joins the S3 team this month from Engineer Brigade, we welcome his experience and look forward to his input to the S3 section. We are eagerly awaiting the interim government to accept responsibility for the citizens of Iraq and continue to plan contingencies in order to assist the new leaders in their mission to provide law and order to this country.

From the ABE Section

The Assistant Brigade Engineer team "ABE" has had a busy time over the past month as have the rest of the IRONHORSE team. The ABE section continues the monitoring of all current engineer operations and planning for future operations. Members of the team have all gone on several convoys throughout the city of Baghdad and performed magnificently in the way they secured themselves and interacted with the Iraqi civilians. SPC Pitts



PV2 Obrien mans his machine gun during a recent convoy.

and SPC Duckworth have both been preparing for the Soldier of the Month board. The ABE will welcome a new OIC this month when CPT John Burescia transitions

into the position. We know he will be a valuable addition to the team. The ABE section will farewell CPT Dennis Pintor as he prepares to take command of B/20 EN. He will miss the ABE soldiers, but is excited about his new challenges and looks forward to the new position.

From the S4 Section

During the month of June, the S4 office had a change of personnel. The Assistant S4/ BMO, 1LT Schaffer, has moved on to the S1 shop to be the Public Affairs Officer, she will be missed, even though she is just across the hall. Her replacement is 1LT Caflin, the former HHC XO. The mission has not changed, and will continue to be an ongoing one, to purchase and coordinate for items to ensure the deployment is a success. The items vary from mission to mission. We are still trying to fix the mosquito problem. There are various water leaks, which make underground pools that become excellent breeding grounds for the mosquitoes. Currently KBR is in the process of having the area sprayed. Another project of vital importance is the upgrade to the guard towers. Once the towers are upgraded the safety and security of the individual soldiers will increase by 150%. Also, we continue to upgrade the armor on the vehicles to insure maximum protection when on convoys.

From the S6 Section

The S-6 office, "Combat Commo," ensures that the famous words are transmitted daily, "Guidons, Guidons, Guidons." Transmitting a voice over the radio waves to the battalion leadership sounds pretty simple. However, Combat Commo understands the true amount of work it takes for the Lumberjack Battalion to keep at least three means of communications at all times. Since



Left to right (Back) SSG Cunningham, PFC Gardner, SPC Davis, SPC Williams, SGT Gavin
(Front) PFC Funez, CPT Guthrie, SPC Davila, PFC Cusson, SPC Yang
Not pictured: SGT Stanfield, SPC Kolar, SPC Felix

we've been in theater, we have set up a complete non-secure digital network, secure digital network,

telephone network, and ensured the radio network is up at all times. Our commo specialists have also installed numerous radio systems in new vehicles. Our computer specialist has protected our network by ensuring all updates are installed. In addition to our normal communication duties, we have accepted the challenge of supporting numerous convoys, escort duties and even LTC Holmes' Personal Security Team. For the soldiers in Iraq, next time you pick up a telephone, talk on the radio, or communicate with your computer, remember that Combat Commo provides for you.

From the S1 Section

Over the last month the S1 Section has had some personnel changes: 1LT Schaffer is now our Public Affairs Officer, and we have said goodbye to 2LT Kubicek, who went to lead a platoon in Alpha Company. SPC Gamas and SPC David are still as busy as ever picking up and delivering the mail for all of Ironhorse Base. Because of their dedication, morale is high in the 20th Engineer Battalion.

Congratulations are due to PFC Graham who was promoted on 1 June.

SGT Alford, PFC Graham, SPC Price and SPC Bruorton are kept busy by pulling Base Security for the 1st Brigade or assisting the Battalion on daily convoy missions. The S1, also known as the ALOC, has a critical mission on Battle Tracking for the Battalion Command Section; with the responsibilities



SPC Bruorton, SPC David, and SPC Gamas take time out of their busy schedules to pose for a picture.

of tracking missions, personnel on the battle field, information up-

date and monitoring four command radios. A job well done by some very well-motivated soldiers!

Animal News, cont.

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mentioned before that we have a pool table and ping pong table. We are also kicking off “Operation Tee Box”, a partnership with sponsors from back home, to include the Courses of Clear Creek. We have received golf clubs and are building a closed in driving range & putting green. The partnership with the course is to improve morale here, generate interest in the sport, and hopefully create some new golfers. Please feel free to send golf balls!

Recently, we had some changes to the team. 1LT James Brant moved from Second Platoon Leader to Company Executive Officer where he has been instrumental in managing the operations of the company. 1LT Kris Johnson moved from Assault & Obstacle Platoon to Castle as their XO, and we are confident that he will do an outstanding job there. Although we were sad to see him move on, having Kris with Castle only strengthens the teamwork between the two companies. We received 2LT Jerry Kubicek from HHC, and he moved right into the role of Second Platoon Leader without a hitch. Lastly, SPC Whitelance and PFC Joseph moved to Barracuda in mid May. Although they will be missed here, we know they are going to be a significant part of the Barracuda Team.

In closing, I would like to personally thank all of those special ladies who have contributed to the Family Readiness Group in the past 90 days. The fruit of your labor is the high morale of the soldiers who don't have to worry about the home front. Special thanks to Kerry Brant (the newsletter and website look awesome); to Brandi Garrett (the new T-Shirts look great; keep the cash rolling in); Andrea Schmidt, Suzanne Creel, and Kara Skaggs (thanks for volunteering as much as you do). Lastly, thanks to my wife Clarissa for the leadership, great ideas, and dedication to the families back home! You are doing a great job and your work is appreciated more than you know!

-Animal 6

Chaplain's Corner

By CH Daryl Gordon

As you all know 30 June is a crucial time for both our soldiers and the Iraqi people. The Lumberjacks are performing their mission with utmost motivation and determination. Morale remains high here on Ironhorse Base. The Lumberjacks know how important our mission is to the overall success of the Coalition Forces.

Perhaps the greatest source of motivation is the ability to take leave. The soldiers see that they are getting the opportunity to go home “mid-tour”. Several Lumberjacks have already headed back to the States. Some have even been on leave and returned to duty. Looking forward to the chance to go home gives each soldier hope.

On the spiritual side, we have started a mid-week prayer service. One thing we try and do is provide ample opportunities for spiritual matters. Sundays now has two services, a general Protestant and a Gospel service. Wednesday evenings the services combine for prayer and fellowship. We also offer two different Bible studies during the week. My prayer is that the Lord will work in the lives of our soldiers. I would like to leave you with a verse of Scripture that has meant a great deal to me, “Have not I commanded you? Be strong of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be dismayed: for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9.

- Sapper Chapper

From the CSM

By CSM Matthew Thomas

Hello again, its time for another Lumberjack Soldier update. Since our last newsletter the Battalion has been very busy both in military and humanitarian operations. The Soldiers of the Battalion are continuing to perform well and receive recognition daily. We have several visitors that come to our Camp and all have commented that this is one of the most secure camps, if not the securest, in Baghdad. This is due to the dedication of our Soldiers and leaders that work diligently on the gates and guard towers. Force protection is our primary mission here and we are performing that mission with outstanding results.

We have reached a new point in our tour; as many of you know Soldiers have started to take environmental leave. The requirement for leave to begin was for the unit to have been deployed for 90 days, and that date was 12 June. Although I am happy to report this accomplishment, I want to also take this time to remind all of the family members that it might not be possible for every Soldier to participate in the leave program. We are required to

maintain a majority of our fighting force in country so that means only a small percentage can be gone at any one time. This percentage also includes any emergency leave or injuries that take a Soldier out of country. With this being said,

please understand that in deciding who gets to take leave first and who has to wait until a later date or not at all is a difficult process. A list will be developed for each flight as it is given to us and will be sent to the rear detachment team. Please understand that there will be no master list published due to its sensitive nature and for operational security reasons. It is the Battalion Commander's and my desire that every soldier be able to take leave, but again some things are out of our control and are mission dependent.

Last, but not least, I would again like to thank all of you for your support of our Soldiers and urge you to continue. I would also like to express my appreciation to the spouses of the Soldiers that have reenlisted and the support you have given them to continue their military career in defense of our country. This is no small task that we have embarked on and to reenlist in a combat environment shows perseverance and dedication to duty.

- Lumberjack 9



CSM Thomas and his Personal Security Team get ready to go out on another mission.

From the CDR, cont.

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starting from the very beginning with designing new systems.

Positive signs abound in our area of operations. We have over \$85 million in construction projects planned for Sadr City and 9 Nissan in the next several months. For the first time ever in Sadr City, the Lumberjacks found contractors, developed scopes of work, obtained funding, selected contractors, and began construction on four sewer projects. These initial sewage repair projects valued at just over one million dollars will pave the way for larger projects that will begin the first part of July 2004. We have hired local contractors and unskilled laborers so they can share in the prosperity and give them an opportunity to chart their own future.

I am amazed by the energy of our soldiers and their ability to accomplish any mission. I would like to share with you what our soldiers do during a typical week. Alpha Company contracted and monitored the cleaning and repair of sewer lines in a local community just outside of our forward operating base. Because of efforts like these, this community that was assessed as hostile when we first arrived is now extremely friendly and receptive to our soldiers. Bravo Company organized the opening of a major road adjacent to the old United Nations Headquarters building. This road had been closed for many months and now with the road open local citizens are able to enjoy more freedom of movement throughout their communities. Charlie Company coordinated the purchase and delivery of furniture and appliances for the major electrical substations in our area. Immediately after the war, these stations were looted and damaged by vandals. Now the workers and guards have beds, desks, chairs and refrigerators that will enhance their quality of life and improve their working conditions. Headquarters Company is constantly upgrading the force protection posture of our forward operating base by coordinating and monitoring gate and tower upgrades. Furthermore, these missions are happening simultaneously with force protection, EOD escorts, engineer reconnaissance and other combat patrols.

One reason our soldiers are able to make such a positive impact in our local Baghdad communities is because they are able to focus on task at hand and they do not have to worry about things back home. We are blessed to have dedicated and loving family readiness groups that take care of business on the home front. I understand the first consolidated battalion level family readiness group meeting went well and I encourage everyone to continue to build friendships, share experiences, and lessons learned. I would like to thank all of our soldiers and family members for a job well done. Keep up the good work! All is well and the sky is not falling.

And now you know the rest of the story!

-Lumberjack 6



LTC Holmes and the Lumberjack staff enjoy some the local Iraqi cuisine.

Promotions

In reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelity and abilities of the following soldiers they are hereby promoted in grade in the following month. The soldiers are hereby directed to discharge carefully and diligently the duties of the grade to which they were promoted and uphold the traditions and standards of the United States Army. As noncommissioned and commissioned officers these men and women are charged to observe and follow the orders and directions given by superiors acting according to the laws, articles and rules governing the discipline of the Army, and to correct conditions detrimental to the readiness thereof. In doing so, they will fulfill the greatest obligation as a leader and thereby confirm their status as a noncommissioned or commissioned officer in the United States Army.

June Promotions:

There were no NCO promotions for the month of June.

The following enlisted soldiers were promoted for June:

PFC Graham– HHC
SPC Powers– HHC
PV2 Kessler– A Co
PV2 Martinez– A Co
SPC Moon– A Co
SPC Perry– A Co
SPC Hopkins– A Co
PFC Joseph, S– B Co
PFC Charles– B Co
SPC Bustos– B Co
SPC Johnson– B Co
SPC Joseph, B– B Co
PFC French– C Co



SGT Solomon and CPT Wickersham congratulate SPC Powers after pinning on her new rank.

**Commander
20th Engineer Battalion
Unit #90014
APO AE 09373**